British Waterways

STATE OF THE WATERWAYS' HERITAGE 2008/09

HEAD OF HERITAGE

JULY 2009

Summary

2008/09 was a year of steady progress for waterways heritage. By January 2009 British Waterways (BW) employed for the first time a full complement of nine heritage advisors. Considerable effort was devoted to implementing minimum safety standards across BW and this saw a significant increase of both contacts with heritage regulators and heritage consents. Buildings at Risk numbers continued to be driven down during the year and a number of important heritage assets were repaired and improved against a background of recession and increasingly tight expenditure. The year also saw an increase in partnership working and in the use made of volunteers to assist BW with a range of heritage activities. These positives will be built upon in 2009/10 and beyond.

Cover photograph: Lancaster Canal Trust volunteers repairing Braithwaite's Bridge, Lancaster Canal.

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Introduction

The State of the Waterways Heritage report 2008/09 quantifies BW's heritage assets and summarises the ongoing work of managing, maintaining and securing the waterways heritage. The report reflects changes and charts progress towards the achievement of BW's goals for heritage. These are:

- Valuing heritage in its own right and for the public benefits it brings
- Promoting heritage awareness and skills throughout BW
- 100% legal compliance
- Reduction of Buildings at Risk (BaR)
- Heritage assets improved through repair or regeneration

BW's heritage goals accord with the policies of the two UK Governments. For Scotland, the Scottish Government has set out the following aims in *Scotland's Canals: An Asset for the Future* (2002):

- Increasing awareness and appreciation of our canal network
- Recognising the role canals can play in delivering wider public policy objectives

For England and Wales the following two areas for Government priority contained in Defra's *Strategic Steer for BW* (February 2008) are relevant to heritage:

- Maintaining the network in satisfactory order
- Delivering a range of additional public benefits

The State of the Waterways Heritage report 2008/09 updates and replaces the 2007/08 report.

Key Findings 2008/09

- Cause for concern
- Requiring attention
- Making progress

- 10 recorded incidents of non-compliance.
- BaR numbers reduced from 43 in 2007/08 to 24 in 2008/09.
- Practical training constrained by budgets and minimum safety standards.
- Increased use of partnerships and volunteers.
- Levels of heritage awareness raised throughout BW.
- All 9 nine business units employing a heritage advisor.
- Heritage assessments for 288 residential properties carried out.
- Register of sensitive development sites maintained and updated.
- National awards for heritage works by BW & partners.

Essential Data

Listed Buildings and Scheduled Monuments

After the Church of England and the National Trust, BW cares for the third largest estate of listed buildings in the UK. In 2008/09 there were 2,756 listed buildings, the same number as in 2007/08. Scheduled monuments 'increased' from 51 in 2007/08 to 99 in 2008/09, due to more accurate reporting by BW Scotland, where technically 4 different canals comprise 40 separately scheduled lengths. The development of a dedicated Heritage Map on BW's GIS began in 2008/09 and is making heritage data more comprehensive (e.g. by including indicative curtilage) and easier to retrieve.

	East Mids	London	North West	Scotland	South East	South West	Wales & Border C'ties	West Mids	Yorks	BW TOTAL
No. Scheduled Monuments	0	7	6	48 (incl. 4 canals making 40 scheduled lengths)	5	8	10	8	7	99
+/- from 07/08 figures	0	0	0	+44	+1	+1	+1	+1	0	+48
No. Grade I / A Listed Buildings	0	4	3	9	0	2	1	1	4	24
No. Grade II* / B Listed Buildings	3	1	2	46	2	9	15	6	10	94
No. Grade II / C (S) Listed Buildings	135	52	535	30	265	177	532	586	326	2638
Total Listed Buildings 2008/09	138	57	540	85	267	188	548	593	340	2756
+/- from 07/08 figures	+4	0	0	-21	-11	+16	+12	0	0	0

Table 1. Scheduled Monuments and Listed Buildings

Grade II listed Borwick Bridge, Lancaster Canal, repaired to a high standard after bridge bashing.

BW's Annual Report & Accounts 2008/09 show that £28.6m was spent on major works to principal assets (£21.5m in 2007/08) and £70.9m was spent on maintenance (£68.8m in 2007/08). As in past years, a significant proportion of all works was to historic assets. In addition a large number of minor but essential works were carried out under BW's minimum safety standards (MSS) programme. This included additional bollards at lock-sides, cill warning signs and lock ladders in places. Chart 1 shows the condition of BW principal assets (e.g. operational locks, bridges, aqueducts) that are listed buildings. Non-principal listed assets (e.g. mileposts, cottages) are not included. The chart shows that in 2008/09 1,420 listed assets were in Very Good/Good/Fair condition and 348 were in Poor or Bad condition. In 2007/08 there were 1,100 principal assets in Very Good/Good/Fair and 374 in Poor/Bad.

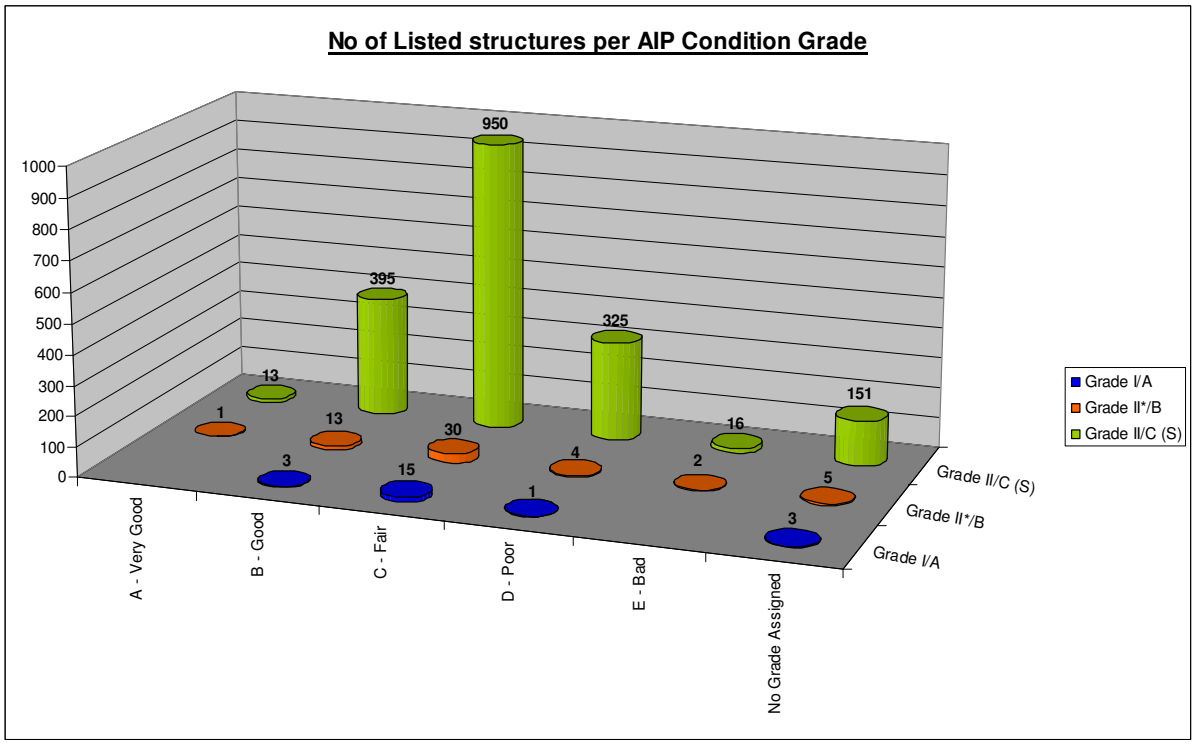


Chart 1. Condition grades of Listed principal assets (March 2008/09).

New byweir at Lock 37, South Stratford Canal; quality work creating tomorrow's heritage.

Conservation Areas

The number of conservation areas affecting BW increased again slightly in 2008/09 with three business units reporting new or newly discovered additions. However the total linear length recorded decreased from 636.7km to 616.6km; this is likely to be the result of more accurate mapping. Conservation area appraisals produced by local authorities rose from 104 in 2007/08 to 117 in 2008/09.

	East Mids	London	North West	Scotland	South East	South West	Wales & Border C'ties	West Mids	Yorks	BW TOTAL
No. Waterways designated as linear CA's	1	14 (waterway focussed)	3	1	2	0	3	7	1	32
Total length designated as CA (in kms)	22.6	45	17.7	7.3	98	0	211	189.3	25.7	616.6
No. other CA's covering sections of Waterway	27	25	49	9	23	36	16	58	38	281
No. CA Appraisals available	0	20	c11	5	9	30	10	32	Not known	117
Total no. of CA's	28	39	52	10	25	36	19	65	39	313
+/- from 2007/08 figures	0	+4	0	+1	0	0	+3	+13	0	+21

Table 2. Conservation Areas

Left: Gloucester Docks, an urban conservation area where new development has recently taken place. Right: Crinan Basin, a rural conservation area in Scotland.

Buildings at Risk

In 2004/05 BW set about reducing its Buildings at Risk (BaRs). According to English Heritage's Government Historic Estates Unit, BW is only the second publicly owned estate to have a BaR campaign; the other being the Ministry of Defence. Numbers of BW BaRs have been reduced steadily from 125 in 2004/05 to 43 in 2007/08 and 35 in 2008/09. Of these 35, 11 are fully repaired and awaiting removal from local authority registers, leaving 24 still 'at risk' with a BW deadline of April 2010 to reduce this number further. Navigation Warehouse, Wakefield, now fully repaired and refurbished remains on the English Heritage register only until occupied by a tenant.

Left: A milepost BaR on the Caldon Canal undergoing maintenance and repainting. Right: North Warehouse, Sharpness, a BaR whose repairs are delayed by the current economic climate.

		East Mids	London	North West	Scotland	South East	South West	Wales & Border C'ties check	West Mids	Yorks	BW TOTAL
No. on EH/Scottish Civic Trust list		0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	1	4
No. on Local Authority BaR list	A/1	0	0	1	0	0	2	2	0	0	5
	B/2	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	3
	C/3	0	0	4	0	0	0	6	2	2	14
	D/4	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	0	2	8
	E/5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
	F/6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	G/7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total No. BaRs		0	0	6	3	0	2	16	2	6	35
No. repaired/ awaiting removal from BaR lists		0	0	4	0	0	0	4	0	3	11

Table 3. Buildings at Risk

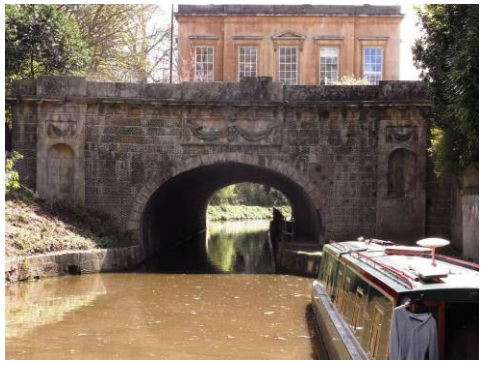
In 2008/09 as in 2007/08 no urgent works notices were served upon BW in connection with repairs to BaRs. And while repairs to North Warehouse, Sharpness were delayed because of escalating costs, repairs to the grade II* listed workshops at Ellesmere Yard were undertaken in 2008/09 with grant aid of £25k from the Market Towns Initiative and £80k from North Shropshire District Council's BaR fund. Ellesmere Tunnel also received £36k from North Shropshire DC and Harecastle Tunnel South portal was repaired as part of £30k grant aid for a wider project on the site.

Other Designations

In 2008/09 the number of registered historic parks and gardens or gardens and designed landscapes affecting BW's estate increased from 33 to 36 but the number of registered historic battlefields decreased from 14 to 12. UNESCO World Heritage Sites (WHS) potentially affecting BW increased to five, with the inscription in July 2008 of Frontiers of the Roman Empire: Antonine Wall in Scotland. Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and its adjoining sections of the Llangollen Canal was nominated by the Government in 2008 and its assessment process unfolded in 2008/09 *(Note: it was confirmed by UNESCO on 28 June 2009 that Pontcysyllte would be inscribed as a World Heritage Site)*.

	East Mids	London	North West	Scotland	South East	South West	Wales & Border C'ties	West Mids	Yorks	BW TOTAL
No. registered historic parks & gardens/gardens & designed landscapes adjacent to canals	4	7	5	2	4	2	7	3	2	36
No. registered historic battlefields adjacent to canals	1	0	0	N/A	1	3	4	1	2	12
No. locally listed buildings	1	Not known	Not known	N/A	Not known	4	6	38	Not known	49
No. World Heritage Sites	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	5

Table 4. Other designations



Tunnels 1 & 2 in the Bath WHS were cleared of vegetation by BW staff and volunteers.

Compliance

100% legal compliance for heritage is a BW goal. In 2008/09 there were 10 instances of unauthorised works to listed buildings and scheduled monuments; most were relatively minor and all were either rectified or have plans in place to rectify them. Putting this in context; of 332 consents applied for and granted in 2008/09, 3% were non-compliant (as against 190 in 2007/08, of which 2.6% were non-compliant). Of the total 671 works granted consent or clearance in 2008/09, less than 1.5% were non-compliant. The high level of consents and clearances in 2008/09 was due to BW's MSS programme. Most MSS works involved minor changes (e.g. fixing cill warning signs to balance beams) but a number of local authorities required consent applications for them.

		East Mids	London	North West	Scotland	South East	South West	Wales & Border C'ties	West Mids	Yorks	BW TOTAL
Consent granted	SM's	0	1	2	22	0	8	1	0	0	34
		0	8	0	26	2	5	0	0	0	41
	LB's	44	6	58	1	8	1	82	80	18	298
		31	17	12	0	5	6	23	17	29	140
	CA's	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		0	1	1	0	1	4	0	2	0	9
	Total	44	7	60	23	8	9	83	80	18	332
		31	26	13	26	8	15	23	19	29	190
Clearance granted	SM's	1	1	0	2	0	6	6	2	0	18
	LB's	12	0	20	0	31	32	112	69	6	282
	CA's	3	0	0	0	0	1	0	35	0	39
	Total	16	1	20	2	31	39	118	106	6	339
No consent or clearance required		3	4	20	2	3	0	4	0	0	36
Consent refused (SMC, LBC or CAC)		0	0	1	0	0	0	4	7	0	12
Unauthorised works		3	0	1	2	3	0	1	0	0	10

Table 5. Works to Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas (consents for 2007/08 in highlighted rows)

In terms of archaeological recording (usually performed as a condition of LBC, SMC or planning permission) activity was higher for some areas (e.g. archaeological searches) but lower for others (e.g. evaluations linked to development sites). Only one excavation took place in 2008/09 (at Wednesfield Bridge, Wyrley & Essington) but there were 38 survey/recordings including the recording of an historic lifting stop-gate on the repaired section of the Monmouthshire & Brecon Canal.

		East Mids	London	North West	Scotland	South East	South West	Wales & Border C'ties	West Mids	Yorks	BW TOTAL
No. archaeological searches		2	2	10	50	1	6	0	13	0	84
No. planning permissions granted with archaeological conditions		0	0	3	4	1	2	0	1	0	11
Archaeo -logical works	Desk-based assessments	2	2	10	1	11	5	0	3	0	34
	Evaluations	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	3
	Watching briefs	1	0	0	3	2	1	0	1	0	8
	Surveys/recordings	0	0	10	0	21	4	1	1	1	38
	Excavations	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1

Table 6. Archaeological recording

Archaeological recording of a lifting stop-gate on the Monmouthshire & Brecon Canal near Bridge 106.

Funding

Against a difficult economic background grants awarded for heritage-related activity amounted to £1,233,500 in 2008/09 (£3,181,600 in 2007/08). Wales & Border Counties received a number of grants for works to BaRs (see above). North West received £662k for visitor and access works and repairs at the scheduled Bugsworth Basin and the grade I listed Lune Aqueduct. South West was awarded £80,000 from the People's Millions for Brimscombe Port walls restoration (using volunteers and prisoners). Yorkshire received £136k for interpretation projects at Bingley, Saltaire, Shipley, Marsden Moor and Dark Peak reservoirs.

		East Mids	London	North West	Scotland	South East	South West	Wales & Border C'ties	West Mids	Yorks	BW TOTAL £'s
Grants awarded in 2008/09	**Total value in £Ks**	157	10	662	0	0	85	183.5	0	136	1,233,500
		0	0	440	690	7	0	245.6	1,792	7	3,181,600
	No. schemes	1	1	4	0	0	2	4	0	4	16

***Table 7. Heritage related funding** (grants for 2007/08 in highlighted rows)*

Brimscombe Port Walls restoration was completed by volunteers and prisoners and funded with People's Millions.

Staffing &Training

By January 2009 all nine business units employed a heritage advisor and these people drove heritage training forward throughout 2008/09. 107 days' worth of heritage awareness and practical skills training took place, with 873 staff attending. As in 2007/08 training concentrated for the most part on raising awareness of BW heritage philosophy and UK heritage legislation (team/tool box talks) and on use of lime mortars (live site/yard based practical training sessions).

Lime mortar training at Wales & Border Counties.

		East Mids	London	North West	Scotland	South East	South West	Wales & Border C'ties	West Mids	Yorks
Heritage training (days)	Live-site practical	0	0	0	0	3	6	0	1	0
	BW yard practical	0	1	1	0	3	2	0	3	3
	External practical	2	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0
	Team/tool box talks	2	18	0	3	2	14	2	23	17
Total days		4	19	1	3	8	22	3	27	20

Table 8. Heritage training

Awareness raising was delivered in-house by heritage advisors, assisted by volunteer local waterway historians in places. Practical heritage skills training was delivered by specialist consultants. who also carried out archaeological recording and heritage assessments of historic properties where needed.

		East Mids	London	North West	Scotland	South East	South West	Wales & Border C'ties	West Mids	Yorks
Works undertaken by consultants	General advice	-	✓	-	-	✓	-	✓	✓	-
	Archaeology	✓	✓	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	-
	Survey work	✓	-	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Training	-	✓	-	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Other tasks	-	-	-	-	✓	-	✓	-	✓

Table 9. Use of heritage consultants

Volunteers

There was an increase in the number of volunteers working with BW in 2008/09. Independent experts, canal societies and other groups represented on the British Waterways Advisory Forum (BWAF) Heritage Sub-group helped with historic research and enquiries about historic boats. Practical work was also carried out by voluntary groups; notably on the Droitwich Canal restoration, at Brimscombe Port, on the Grantham Canal (where Grantham Canal Restoration Society raised money and engaged in planning the rebuilding of Lock 18) and on the Lancaster Canal where the Lancaster Canal Trust (LCT) repaired the scheduled Hincaster Horse-path under a partnership scheme with BW and English Heritage. On the Rochdale Canal, Groundwork Oldham, with local volunteers and Rochdale Canal Trust members repaired the listed Coppy Bridge. In Yorkshire, students from Craven College cleared vegetation and carried out repairs to Riddlesden lime-kilns and in Chester the Chester Canals Trust carried out heritage recording of artefacts at the listed and BaR registered Taylor's Yard.

		East Mids	London	North West	Scotland	South East	South West	Wales & Border C'ties	West Mids	Yorks
Activity undertaken by volunteers	General heritage advice / research or recording (e.g. on boats)	✓	✓	✓	-	-	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Awareness raising / history talks / HOD	-	-	✓	✓	-	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Clearing vegetation or other maintenance	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Repairs/rebuilding	✓	-	✓	-	-	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Other activity	✓	✓	✓	-	-		✓	-	-

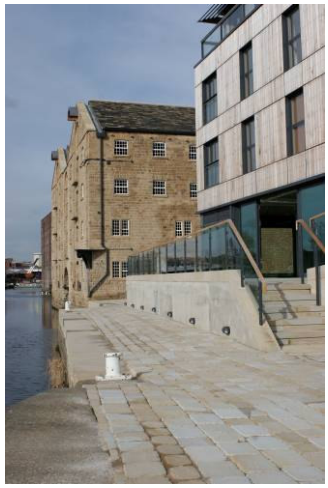
Table 10. Volunteer heritage activity

Left: LCT volunteers repairing a bridge across Hincaster Horse-path. Right: Students from Craven College clearing vegetation and repairing Riddlesden lime kilns, a Yorkshire BaR.

Property

The economic climate in 2008/09 meant less development activity took place than in previous years. Heritage assessments were carried out on 288 of BW's residential properties and leases on heritage buildings continued to have conditions applied. 162 listed buildings were leased in 2008/09. Five business units reported that leases (ranging from 6 months to 999 years) on historic properties had covenants applied to safeguard heritage features.

In line with BW standards, data on potential development sites that include heritage assets was maintained throughout the year. A register of sensitive sites monitors the completion of heritage assessments, conservation plans and archaeological recording where these are required; see table 11, which is cumulative because of the long time-scales involved with many developments. Recent examples of high quality regeneration that has benefited from heritage input include Wakefield Waterfront and Stourport Basins, both reaching completion in 2008/09.



Left: Regeneration at Stourport Basins. Right: Regeneration of Wakefield Waterfront includes the listed Navigation Warehouse.

	East Mids	London	North West	Scotland	South East	South West	Wales & Border C'ties	West Mids	Yorks
Total no of potential development sites	3	16	9	22	9	14	7	19	6
No of potential sites with heritage sensitivity	3	13	9	21	4	5	5	6	5
No. of heritage assessments	3	5	7	4	2	-	6	3	3

Table 11. Potential development sites with heritage sensitivity (to March 2009)

An important publication (scheduled for publication in September 2009) was jointly produced with English Heritage and aims to raise awareness of heritage considerations at waterside development sites.

Joint BW/English Heritage publication on development at the historic waterside

Publicity

There was widespread positive publicity for BW heritage activity in 2008/09. The completion of the £3.8m restoration at Foxton Locks and Inclined Plane won both the Historic Environment and Outstanding Achievement categories of the BURA Waterway Renaissance Awards. The Education & Learning category award went to the Bringing the Leeds & Liverpool Canal to Life, a community-led project centred on heritage walks in Lancashire. Wakefield Waterfront Area Based Regeneration was also commended in the awards.

Reconstruction drawing of the 1875 lift, Anderton Boat Lift visitor centre.

Heritage events in 2008/09 included opening sites to visitors (e.g. Saltaire and Bingley in Yorkshire; Spiers Wharf and Rosebank Distillery in Scotland) and living history events in London and at Foxton.

Six out of nine business units continued to be represented on regional Heritage Environment Forums and the regional *Heritage Counts 2008* publications featured work by BW's London and Yorkshire business units.

Interpretation projects involving information boards, signs and figures were completed at Foxton, Bugsworth Basin, the Montgomery Canal, Wappenshall Junction and Anderton Boat Lift.

		East Mids	London	North West	Scotland	South East	South West	Wales & Border C'ties	West Mids	Yorks
Type of publicity	Local press/radio	✓	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	National press/radio			✓	-	✓	✓	✓	-	✓
	External presentations	✓		✓	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Heritage media events	-	✓	-	-	✓	✓	-	✓	✓
Heritage open days/activities at shows		-	✓	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Representation on regional Historic Environment Forum		✓	✓	Requested	✓	-	✓	-	✓	✓

Table 12. Publicity and participation

An actor impersonates Gordon Cale Thomas, inventor of the inclined plane at Foxton, June 2008.

Contributions were made to the Institution of Civil Engineering (ICE) journal *Engineering History and Heritage* and to an ICE Panel for Historical Engineering Works seminar on Scottish Canal Reservoirs. There was generally positive coverage of BW heritage activity in local, national and waterway press in 2008/09 with *Towpath Talk* and *NarrowBoat* featuring heritage items and the Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC) journal *Context* running an article on the recording and conservation of wartime defence structures along the Kennet & Avon Canal.

Pressures

Positive and negative pressures affect BW's heritage activities. 2008/09 saw increased use made of heritage volunteers and improved awareness of the importance of heritage to BW across its waterway business units. These are positives.

Negative pressures included the continuing need to make large numbers of consents for alterations to listed buildings in order to fulfil MSS requirements. As in 2007/08 there were inconsistencies of approach experienced in dealings with local authorities, although only three local authorities refused consent for cill warning signs and their concerns were overcome following successful negotiations by BW heritage advisors and colleagues.

Poor planning for some heritage-related works was flagged by several business units and the number of unauthorised works in 2008/09 was double the number reported in 2007/08 (although as a percentage of total works this represents only an increase of 0.4% over 2007/08) . Part of the reason

for this increase was the employment of a full complement of heritage advisors which led to better controls and reporting of non-compliance at regular heritage healthchecks; in the past such incidents often went unreported. Most of the unauthorised works were quickly rectified without further action from the authorities.

Commercial activity was only referred to as a negative by one business unit; an improvement over 2007/08 although the 2008/09 recession has slowed the pace of commercial development throughout the UK.

Positive Pressures

1. Increasing use of volunteers
2. Improved awareness across business units
3. Positive feedback from stakeholders

Negative Pressures

1. Minimum Safety Standards
2. Poor planning for heritage works
3. Limited funding & resources

During 2008/09 BW continued to make progress with development of heritage management agreements in advance of the Heritage Protection Bill (England and Wales) and assisted English Heritage in delivering a series of regional Historic Environment Local Management (HELM) seminars on the same subject. These took place at Guildford, Bristol, Preston and Newcastle and were well received. The postponement of the Heritage Protection Bill was a frustration for BW as for others in the heritage sector.

The BWAF Heritage Sub-group responded positively to requests for advice relating to historic boats and has assisted BW with revisions to its Heritage Policy and Principles. There is clearly a positive role for volunteers to help BW with a range of heritage activities and BW intends to build upon this in the future.